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IV.—THE “CORONES TWO” OF THE *SECOND NUN’S TALE*: A SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE

In an earlier article in these *Publications*¹ I pointed out that the roses and lilies brought by the angel to Cecilia and Valerian symbolized martyrdom and virginity, and so focussed in themselves the significance of the story. My illustrations, however, were all drawn, as it happened, from the *Sermones aurei* of Jacobus de Voragine. It is perhaps worth while to put beyond any possible doubt the fact that the symbolism which permeates the *Sermones* was both widespread and familiar. I shall, accordingly, round out the argument presented three years ago by a number of additional passages drawn from a variety of sources.

In that curious *mélange*, the *Miroir de Mariage* of Eustache Deschamps, Repertoire de Science, after inveighing against “le delit de femme estrange,” and moralizing at length upon woman’s beauty, that passes as the passing of the rose, (with a digression on the subject of Job’s wife), instructs Franc Vouloir regarding the Fountain of Compunction, and the garden that surrounds it. The setting is as remote as may be from that of the passage in Jacopo’s sermon-book. But among the flowers of the garden, along with “l’olive de misericorde” and the “palmes de justice,” are found, as in the sermons,

. . . la rose ensement
De martire, et semblablement
De chasteté le tresdoulz lis.²

¹ Vol. xxvi, No. 2 (June, 1911), pp. 315-23.

² Lines 6135-37 (ed. Raynaud, Vol. xi, p. 201).

It is in a very different poem, however,—the *Miserere* of Renclus de Moiliens—that the most striking elaboration of the theme occurs. I shall quote the pertinent stanzas in their immediate context:

Li tormenteur s'esbaïrent
 Quant tel vertu en fames virent.
 Hom, tu dis fame est fraisle et lente;
 Mais ches virges t'en desmentirent
 Quant double offrande a Dieu offrirent.
 Et l'une et l'autre fu moult gente;
 Le premiere est caste jovente,
 Et le seconde est le torment
 De le mort ke por Dieu soffrirent.
 Ou est ore hom ki se presente
 De Dieu sivre par tele sente
 Ki ches pucheles le sivirent?

Jhesus, ki en tous biens foisonnes,
 Ki toutes coses asaisonnes
 A droit, et reus justes merites
 Bien sont asseür, quant tu tones,
 Ichès toies amies bones,
 Virges, martires beneïtes.
 Bien sont de tes menaches quites,
 Ne n'ont pas coronnes petites.
 Eles clament doubles coronnes
 De toi, et tu bien t'en aquites.
 En l'escriture sont escrites
 Queles et por coi tu lor dones.

Virge ki de carneus delis
 Garda sen cors pur et alis,
 Quant, por haper, le faulosa
 Li mondes fartilliés, polis,
 Digne est de corone de lis.
 Et quant soffrir martire osa,
 Ke sans se car virge arosa
 Li vermaus le blanc enrosa.
 Por chou li capeliers eslis
 Sen capel li entrerrosa;
 Le lis meslé o le rose a
 S'en est li capiaus plus jolis.

Bele sanlanche est et doucete
 Dou lis a le car virge et nete
 Et de le martire a le rose.
 A virge aïert blanke florete
 Et au martir le flour rougete.
 Offrande fait de bele cose
 Ki por Dieu sen virge sanc pose;
 Et por chou Dieus li entrepose
 Au blanc lis le rouge rosete:
 Ch'est double joie ou el repose.
 Mais virge ki l'ame despose
 Sans sanc n'a fors le flour blankete.³

Four centuries before Chaucer, Ælfric, who also tells in English verse the story of St. Cecilia,⁴ explains elsewhere the symbolism of the lily and the rose:

Godes gelaðung hæfð on sibbe lilian, þæt is clæne drohtnung; on ðæm gewinne, rosan, ðæt is martyrdôm.⁵

Ðæra rosena blostman getæcniað mid heora rēadnyse martyrdôm, and ða lilian mid heora hwitnesse getæcniað ða scinendan clænnyse ansundes mægðhādes.⁶

Two centuries earlier still Alcuin wrote the following:

Cæcilia, Agathes, Agnes et Lucia virgo:
 Hæc istis pariter ara sacrata micat,
 Lilia cum rosis fulgent in vertice quarum
 Et lampas rutilat luce perenne simul.⁷

³ *Li Romans de Carité et Miserere de Renclus de Moiliens, Poèmes de la fin du xii^e siècle*, ed. A.-G. Van Hamel, Paris, 1885, stanzas exciii-vi, pp. 238-40.

⁴ *Lives of the Saints*, xxxiv, E. E. T. S., 114, pp. 356 ff.

⁵ *Homilies*, II, 546, 2: "On the Nativity of the Holy Martyrs."

⁶ *Homilies*, I, 444, 13: "On the Assumption of the Blessed Mary."

Professor Frederick Tupper—who has indicated the mystical meaning of the two flowers in the notes to his *Riddles of the Exeter Book*, p. 166—has been kind enough to call my attention to these two passages.

⁷ *Alcuini (Albini) Carmina (Monumenta Germanicæ Historica, Poetarum Latinorum mediæ ævi, Tom. I, 310)*; No. IX (Ad aram sanctarum virginum) of the "Inscriptiones ecclesiæ sancti Vedasti in Pariete."

Still more explicit is the reference in the *débat* of the rose and the lily by Sedulius Scottus:

Tu, rosa, martyribus rutilam das stemmate palmam,
Lilia, virgineas turbas decorate stolatas.⁸

But it is in the hymnology of the church that one finds the fullest recognition of the symbolism which gathers up and concentrates, in the two fadeless crowns, the "glorious lyf and passioun" of St. Cecilia—as the dower of Crashaw's St. Theresa finds its emblem in the magnificent hyperbole of the eagle and the dove. The first lines of a few of the hymns in Chevalier's great *Repertorium* will show how thoroughly the conception had pervaded mediæval religious thought:

Rosa vernans charitatis | lilium virginitatis; ⁹
Rosa florens martyrii | ; ¹⁰
Liliis candens Emerantiam | et rosis martyr rubra purp.; ¹¹
Rosa rubens et candens lilium | in beatâ refulget Aureâ; ¹²
Lilium vernat niveo colore | et rosæ florent simul; ¹³
Rubra defluxit rosa, sed coronam | martyrum poscit cap; ¹⁴
Virgineus flos, lilium, | cruore fusus roseo.¹⁵

⁸ *Sedulii Scotti Carmina* (*Mon. Germ. Hist.*, Poet. Lat. med. æv., III, 231); No LXXXI, ll. 41-42, "De rosæ liliique certamine idem Sedulius cecinit."

⁹ Chevalier, *Repertorium hymnologicum*, No. 32994. So No. 32993, with the substitution of *castitatis* for *virginitatis*.

¹⁰ No. 32990.

¹¹ No. 10628.

¹² No. 40556.

¹³ No. 10631.

¹⁴ No. 32998.

¹⁵ No. 21647; cf. No. 21646. A somewhat different turn is given to the symbolism in another hymn, quoted in the *Analecta Bollandiana*, VI, 395 (*Hymni, Sequentiæ aliæque carmina sacra hactenus inedita*, Cod. Brux. 9786-90, *f. 238va, xv cent.):

Ave, virgo gloriosa,
Toti mundo gaudiosa,
Beata tu Cecilia;
Rubens sicut florens rosa,
Tota dulcis et formosa
Candore vincens lydia.

Finally, in the stirring lines of an eleventh-century poet, the roses and lilies are bestowed upon Rome itself:

O Roma nobilis, orbis et domina,
Cunctarum urbium excellentissima,
Roseo martyrum sanguine rubea,
Altis et virginum liliis candida.¹⁶

The symbolism, then, which Chaucer explicitly recognizes—

Thou with thy gerland wroght of rose and lilie;
Thee mene I, mayde and martir, seint Cecilie!—¹⁷

was without question clear to his contemporary readers.

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¹⁶ Quoted in Taylor, *The Mediæval Mind*, II, p. 200. I am indebted to Professor H. M. Belden for this reference. Traube's study of the poem (*Abhand. Bairish. Akad. Philos.-philol. Klasse*, 1891) I have not been able to consult.

¹⁷ G 27-28.